



Research Summary Number 3

Learning and Performing Management Behaviors-

Who's Better, Men or Women?

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Abstract:

The study examines whether perceptual differences exist in management behaviors performed by men and women. The study also examines whether men and women working on managerial developmental goals in the workplace are perceived differently. The observed differences are interesting.

Learning and Performing Management Behaviors – Who Are Better, Men or Women?

Question #1: Are men or women perceived to be better at important management behaviors?

Results: The co-worker assessment of effectiveness immediately following the leadership development training experience was analyzed. For purposes of this analysis, a difference in ratings of 0.25 to 0.49 when comparing men to women was considered a slight difference. A difference of 0.50 or higher was considered a noticeable difference. (The interval 0.50 represented half a standard deviation). In all but one category (Communications), the average ratings for women were higher than for men. For Communications, the

average rating for men (3.40) was slightly higher than for women (3.14). Across the top ten goal categories, the average ratings for men were all below 3.0 except for the category of Communications. The average ratings for women were all above 3.0 except for the categories of Awareness/Learning/Development, and Balance/Flexibility/Time Management.

Women and men shared three of their four top-rated categories. Men were rated highest on Communications (3.40), Conflict Management (2.99), Supervision/Administration (2.99), and Decision Making/Follow Through (2.97). Women were rated highest on Teamwork (3.35), Decision Making/Follow Through (3.21),

Conflict Management (3.19) and Communications (3.14).

Conclusions: While men were perceived to be slightly more effective than women at communications-related management behaviors, women were rated higher than men on all the other categories. Teamwork was rated noticeably higher and the categories of Relationships, Subordinate Support & Development, and Personal Presence were rated slightly higher.

The Analytical Process

The sample for this study was 2,724 middle-level and higher managers attending leadership development programs (1995-1997) through either Discovery Learning, Inc. or the Center for Creative Leadership. Of all participants, 28% were women and 72% were men.

The managers used a goal-setting and learning-assessment tool, GoalGetter, to identify and to establish follow-up goals at the end of their leadership development training experience. The managers were allowed to select from over 325 goals organized into 25 categories. Each participant could select up to ten goals but was encouraged to consider no more than five. Multiple goals could be selected from the same category. The managers were assessed for effectiveness by co-workers on their selected goals upon returning to work from their leadership development training experi-

Table 1

Goal Category	Pre-rating of Effectiveness		
	Men	Women	Difference (W-M)
1. Relationships (64%)	2.80	3.08	0.28
2. Communications (61%)	3.40	3.14	(0.26)
3. Awareness/Learning/Development (53%)	2.67	2.79	0.12
4. Conflict Management (47%)	2.99	3.19	0.20
5. Subordinate Support & Development (47%)	2.84	3.12	0.28
6. Teamwork (46%)	2.84	3.35	0.51
7. Personal Presence (46%)	2.69	3.07	0.38
8. Balance/Flexibility/ Time Management (45%)	2.66	2.88	0.22
9. Decision Making/Follow Through (37%)	2.97	3.21	0.24
10. Supervision/Administration (37%)	2.99	3.02	0.03

ence (pre-rating) and three to four months later (post-rating). The goal-effectiveness assessment used a five point scale from 1-very ineffective to 5-very effective. For purposes of this analysis a 0.25 average difference in men and women was considered a slight difference and a 0.50 average difference was considered a significant difference.

**Question # 2:
Are men or women better at implementing their self-selected developmental goals?**

Results: As with the first analysis, a 0.50 improvement from the first effectiveness measure to the second equaled half a standard deviation, so this level or above was considered a noticeable improvement. Women made noticeable improvements in all categories except Supervision/Administration where their improvement was slight. Men made noticeable improvements in all categories except Awareness/Learning/Development (slight improvement), and Communications.

Men and women both had their highest improvement ratings in the same category: Balance/

Flexibility/Time Management (women, 0.89; men, 0.79). The second highest improvement rating for women was in the area of Awareness/Learning/Development (0.80). In both of these categories, women were rated lowest in the initial assessment. Relationships (0.76) and Communications (0.73) rounded out the top four improvements for women. For men, the category of greatest improvement was also the one in which they received their lowest initial assessment. Their top four categories of improvement also include Personal Presence (0.79), Relationship (0.77), and Decision Making/Follow Through (0.76).

Women made a noticeably greater improvement than men did in the areas of Communications and Awareness/Learning/Development. Both men and women had similar levels of improvement in all other categories. Over all ten categories, the average rating improvement for women was 0.69 and for men was slightly lower at 0.61.

Conclusions: Overall, the women made more measurable progress on the goals they selected than did the men. Women made the most progress in areas where their initial assessment was lowest. This was less so for men than for women.

Table 2

Goal Category Percentage of all managers selecting one or more goals from the category. Top ten goals represent 75% of all goals selected.	Men Amount of improvement from pre- to post-rating	Women Amount of improvement from pre- to post-rating	Difference (W-M)
1. Relationships (64%)	0.77	0.76	(0.01)
2. Communications (61%)	0.15	0.73	0.58
3. Awareness / Learning / Development (53%)	0.36	0.80	0.44
4. Conflict Management (47%)	0.71	0.60	(0.11)
5. Subordinate Support & Development (47%)	0.73	0.62	(0.11)
6. Teamwork (46%)	0.51	0.68	0.17
7. Personal Presence (46%)	0.79	0.69	(0.10)
8. Balance / Flexibility / Time Management (45%)	0.79	0.89	0.10
9. Decision Making / Follow Through (37%)	0.76	0.71	(0.05)
10. Supervision / Administration (37%)	0.56	0.42	(0.14)

Questions raised by this analysis:

- In this population, did the women have to perform at a higher level than men did to hold the positions they did?
- Do men and women learn the same management skills in different ways and at different rates?
- Are women able to learn new skills more easily than men are or do they take their personal goals more seriously?

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